



## **Morbidity, Performance and Quality in Primary Care: Dutch General Practice on Stage**

GP Westert, L Jabaaij, FG Schellevis (eds). Published by [Radcliffe Publishing Ltd](#) (Oxford), 2006. ISBN 1846190533. Contains 304 pages. Price GBP 29.95

This compendium of 31 short but informative chapters seeks principally to report results of the second Dutch National Survey of General Practice (DNSGP-2) in the Netherlands, during 2000–2002, as presented at a 2004 international conference, *Dutch general practice on stage*.

Organised broadly around the themes of this conference, this very readable book has six parts: Introduction, Health and disparities, Use of care, Organisation and communication, Quality, and International perspective and the future. It describes general practitioners' role and performance as gatekeepers of the Dutch health system.

By international standards, general practice in the Netherlands is advanced, and the book reflects growing international interest in monitoring and understanding how 'cottage industry' models of primary care can contribute to population health and contain mounting health costs.

The first two chapters of the book summarise respectively the major findings and design of the DNSGP-2, including comparison with the first Dutch National Survey of General Practice conducted in 1987. Involving 104 practices, 195 general practitioners, and approximately 400,000 patients, the DNSGP-2 detected a growth in demand for Dutch general practice services, and found these to be efficient and meet most patient needs for accessible, community-oriented and high quality care. Chapter 3 describes the organisation of the Dutch health system as of 2001, before noting that in 2006 compulsory standard insurance has replaced the Netherlands' two-tier system of public-private financing.

Subsequent chapters detail findings for specific, individual topics including disease prevalences, migrant health, prescribing practices, workload, and patients' perspectives on quality. Three chapters compare the Dutch experience with developments in the United Kingdom.

Parts of the book, such as 'organisation and communication,' could be better fitted, and chapters from outside the Netherlands, for example by Kawachi, sometimes sit uncomfortably despite their purpose of putting Dutch primary care into international perspective. Nevertheless, the editors have produced a comprehensive, representative and clear portrait of general practice in the Netherlands, which is particularly relevant to New Zealand because of the similarity between the two countries' models of general practice. International comparisons are difficult without common methods of data collection. But the DNSGP-2 complements our 2001–2002 National Primary Medical Care Survey, and provides lessons including technical advantages offered by the Dutch patient enrolment system.

The production quality of the book is good and its soft cover form is reasonable value at around NZ\$90 for anyone interested in apprising themselves of recent international developments in primary care.

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